

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES OF STATES IN THE SPHERE OF ENSURING ECONOMIC SECURITY

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Abstract. The *subject of the present* study is the conceptual, theoretical and methodological research of international co-operation of law enforcement bodies of states in the sphere of ensuring economic security, primarily at the international level and on the regional European level. *Methodology.* The paper employs a range of general scientific and special legal methods. In this particular context, the method of analysis and synthesis is of critical importance in order to evaluate the methods and parameters of co-operation between police bodies. The historical method was utilised to trace the emergence and development of the legal and institutional foundations and principles of international co-operation of law enforcement bodies in ensuring economic security of states. The comparative method proved to be of great significance in the course of research into the activities of international law enforcement co-operation bodies and domestic bodies of states. The *objective of this article* is to formulate a cohesive methodology for comprehending the collaborative efforts of law enforcement entities in safeguarding the economic interests of nations. The *findings of the study* demonstrate that the comprehensive enhancement of law enforcement co-operation among states to ensure economic security is firmly grounded in international treaty law and is effectively institutionalised. Concurrently, the advent of contemporary challenges is concomitant with the rise of criminal networks that exercise control through the utilisation of advanced technologies. This situation necessitates a concerted international response, whereby developed states are obligated to provide assistance to their developing counterparts. *Conclusion.* The article concludes that the extant legal and institutional frameworks of international co-operation of law enforcement bodies in ensuring economic security of states can be further developed through enhanced co-operation in information sharing, exchange of best practices and training of legal professionals. Furthermore, academic co-operation is of paramount importance for the continued development of new approaches towards the co-operation of law enforcement agencies in ensuring the economic security of states.

Keywords: international economic security, state economic security, Interpol, Europol, economic crime, crime prevention, international co-operation in the prevention and combatting crime.

JEL Classification: K14, K33, K42

1. Introduction

The contemporary international relations system is characterised by an increasing tendency towards globalisation and integration. The growing impact of these processes on all spheres of human activities is immeasurable, and concerns both legal and illegal actions of different actors operating both domestically and internationally. The advent of new technologies

has been demonstrated to engender substantial changes in social, economic and cultural life. Moreover, these innovations have been demonstrated to motivate criminal actors to utilise them in order to augment their transnational influence. This development consequently introduces a new level of intricacy to the endeavour of international co-operation in combatting crime. As UNITAR correctly observed, "a

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multidimensional problem of corruption and financial crime needs to be tackled through holistic approaches and multi-stakeholder strategies" (UNITAR, 2025). In more precise terms, Zozulia (2022) emphasises that the collective effort to combat international economic crimes necessitates concerted actions by law enforcement agencies across all states. This presupposes a solid research foundation, including study of composition, direction, and determination of effectiveness of all forms of legal co-operation of law enforcement bodies in the prevention and combatting of economic crime.

The phenomenon of globalization, in combination with an increase in the influence of developed states on the economic systems of developing and less-developed nations, has resulted in both legal and illegal ramifications. Consequently, the financial systems of these nations have become susceptible to the threat of criminal infiltration. This raises the question of whether economic security should be considered a subject of criminal legal protection in general. As a multifaceted approach, the strategy encompasses provisions for the prevention of the laundering of criminal assets, the suppression of corruption, and the interdiction of smuggling and trafficking of designated commodities. These considerations are of relevance to all nations, including Ukraine, which is currently engaged in a high-intensity armed conflict aimed at repulsing a full-scale armed aggression. It is evident that all state bodies of Ukraine are primarily concerned with the survival of the state and nation, a situation which invariably leads to a weakening of their capacity in other areas. Concurrently, Ukraine continues to uphold its global responsibility as a proponent of democratic principles, the sanctity of the rule of law, and the maintenance of order. International economic crime, which may take advantage of the conditions of an armed conflict, is an intolerable phenomenon, and Ukraine continues its efforts in combatting that phenomenon.

As Sazonov (2019) observes, the course towards integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures firmly selected in 2014 has precipitated a shift in the trajectory of development of all Ukraine's policies, including in the economic and law enforcement spheres. Since 2019, the Constitution of Ukraine has confirmed the irreversibility of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic course. Consequently, the security of Ukraine, including its economic stability, is contingent upon its integration within the global system. Conversely, a secure and predictable member state will benefit from integration within the global system. It is important to note that these norms are not merely abstract in nature. For instance, Article 22 of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union establishes the foundations for mutual co-operation in the prevention and combatting

of economic crime, enumerating tax evasion, corruption and fraud as the types of crime in question. This renders the investigation of the challenges encountered by law enforcement agencies in co-operating internationally to protect economic security a highly salient issue from both theoretical and practical standpoints.

2. The International Legal Framework on Co-operation of Law Enforcement Agencies in Ensuring Economic Security of States

The criminalisation of the economy, growing corruption and organised crime, and its incursion into key sectors of the economy as a result of weakening state control in the globalised context form the primary threats for the economy of virtually every state. It is evident that ensuring economic security is unfeasible without the timely and deliberate counteraction of these detrimental phenomena by the state and society. International co-operation in ensuring economic security of states plays a vital role in this process. In this regard, Nurullayev (2020) correctly observes that international legal co-operation in combatting crime does not exist in a vacuum, but forms a part of international relations. It is evident that even states which do not possess close political and economic contacts do not generally disregard contacts in the fight against crime. Consequently, the prevention and combatting of crime is identified as a priority for international co-operation.

The UN Charter (1945), the Declaration of Principles of International Law (1970), and the OSCE Final Act (1975) obligate all states to support and develop co-operation with each other and with all states in general in all spheres in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and other international treaties. It is possible to delineate the most efficacious and robust forms of co-operation by drawing upon the collective experience of combatting crime. These forms of co-operation include:

- Conclusion of international agreements in the area of combatting certain types of criminal encroachments;
- joint consultations aimed at the development by each co-operating state and all such states in general of domestic and international strategies of crime prevention;
- participation of states in international organisations specialising in the prevention and combatting crime;
- development of current and long-term programs of co-operation in prevention and combatting crime;
- joint planning of measures of combatting the most dangerous types of crime of international character.

The aforementioned forms of international co-operation in combatting crime can be considered a basis for the determination of primary forms of international co-operation of law enforcement agencies

in the sphere of ensuring economic security of states. The regulation of these entities is governed by a series of international legal instruments, the most significant of which are to be outlined in the following section.

Arguably the first of these was the 1929 Geneva Convention for the Suppression of Counterfeiting Currency. Article 3 of the Convention provides that "the following shall be punishable as ordinary offences 1) any fraudulent making or altering of currency, by whatever means; 2) the fraudulent uttering of counterfeit currency; 3) the introduction into a country of counterfeit currency, or the receiving or obtaining of counterfeit currency with a view to its uttering, knowing it to be counterfeit; 4) the attempt and any intentional participation in any of the foregoing; 5) the fraudulent making, receiving or obtaining of instruments or other articles peculiarly adapted for the counterfeiting or altering of currency". Article 5 of the Convention establishes the procedure for the apprehension and prosecution of individuals found to be culpable of the counterfeiting of currency, irrespective of the nationality of the accused. Article 10 stipulates the extradition of criminals to the requesting state.

Subsequent to this, the conclusion of international treaties has remained an essential element of ensuring the economic security of states. A notable example of this commitment is evidenced by the establishment of the Strasbourg Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime in 1990 by the members of the Council of Europe. The Convention, to which Ukraine acceded in 1997, acknowledges that, within the context of international co-operation, the parties collaborate to achieve investigation and judicial consideration of cases concerning asset confiscation. In accordance with Article 2, each party is obligated to implement "such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to enable it to confiscate instrumentalities and proceeds or property the value of which corresponds to such proceeds". Furthermore, each state party has committed to implementing measures that will enable the processing of requests pertaining to the confiscation of concrete property items that may be considered proceeds or means of crime. In addition to this, they have also agreed to provide assistance to other parties in conducting investigations and preliminary measures. Moreover, they will further facilitate the application of all forms of confiscation, including the search of means, proceeds and other properties that are subject to confiscation.

Another significant treaty that established an international regime for the protection of economic security was the 1988 UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, to which Ukraine acceded in 1991.

In accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, a procedure has been established for the confiscation of assets and proceeds from crime. Consequently, in the event of the proceeds being transformed into a different property, the measures stipulated within the article would be applicable to that property. In the event that the proceeds are found to have been added to property obtained from lawful sources, such property is subject to confiscation. In the event that the income was received from property obtained from lawful sources, such property is subject to confiscation to the extent which corresponds to the value of the unlawful proceeds.

In 2000, the UN treaty system was supplemented by the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Under Article 30 of this Convention, States Parties undertook "to provide technical assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to assist them in meeting their needs for the implementation of this Convention. To that end, States Parties shall endeavour to make adequate and regular voluntary contributions to an account specifically designated for that purpose in a United Nations funding mechanism. States Parties may also give special consideration, in accordance with their domestic law and the provisions of this Convention, to contributing to the aforementioned account a percentage of the money or of the corresponding value of proceeds of crime or property confiscated in accordance with the provisions of this Convention".

From a criminological perspective, the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU is of paramount importance in ensuring the economic security of both Ukraine and Europe. In addition, the document stipulates that the involved parties collaborate in order to prevent and combat money laundering and terrorism financing, both in a political and operational capacity. The parties concerned are tasked with the implementation of the relevant international standards, including those which have been developed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and relevant standards accepted by the European Union. This encompasses collaborative efforts in the realm of drug trafficking, guided by shared principles and conventions. The aforementioned co-operation is directed towards two primary objectives. Firstly, it is intended to combat drug trafficking. Secondly, it is intended to overcome the health and social consequences of drug consumption. Furthermore, it is intended to prevent the distribution of precursors of drugs and psychotropic substances. Moreover, the Agreement touches upon the subjects of combating and preventing general organised crime. The objective of such co-operation is to address the challenges posed by the illicit movement of persons across national boundaries, encompassing the

practices of migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Additionally, it encompasses the illicit trade of goods, economic crimes, including those pertaining to taxation, and instances of corruption within both the public and private spheres.

Finally, the OSCE Charter for European Security, adopted in 1999, should be outlined. The parties concerned reached a consensus to establish a Security platform on the basis of co-operation, with the aim of strengthening collaboration between the OSCE and other international organisations and institutions. This initiative was undertaken to ensure the more effective utilisation of the international community's resources. It was anticipated that the establishment of expeditious expert response and co-operation groups would facilitate the OSCE's capacity to respond in a timely manner to assistance requests in situ. The objective of the Platform is to extend the foundation for police activities with a view to maintaining the rule of law. The Charter establishes an operational centre tasked with the planning and deployment of OSCE operations on the ground. The establishment of the Preparatory Committee under the OSCE Permanent Council is of particular significance in this regard, as it serves to establish a basis for the consultation process within the OSCE. These measures are ultimately aimed at countering the threats posed by international terrorism, violent extremism, organised crime, drug trafficking and acute economic crises (Mohylevska, 1999).

3. The International Institutional Framework on Co-operation of Law Enforcement Agencies in Ensuring Economic Security of States

The prevailing legal framework governing international co-operation among law enforcement bodies in ensuring economic security of states should be further integrated with an existing system of international organisations, which comprise both global and regional institutional structures. Undoubtedly, the most prominent and influential of these is the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). In 1923, the 2nd International Criminal Police Congress in Vienna established an International Criminal Police Commission with the objective of coordinating the efforts of individual states in combatting general crime. The congress was attended by 138 representatives from 20 states across Europe, Asia and America. The organisation was re-established in Paris in 1946, and its present constitution was accepted in 1956. This constitution affirmed the organisation's existing name. The headquarters of Interpol were moved to Lyon in 1989. Interpol currently has 194 member states, making it the largest police organisation in the world (Interpol, 2025). Interpol member states work together with the General Secretariat to exchange

information related to police investigations. Each country has its own National Central Bureau, which links the national police with the global network. Members meet annually at the General Assembly to determine policies, methods, funding and activities. In addition, the heads of the Central Bureaus hold a regular conference to exchange experiences. Ukraine has been a member of Interpol since 1992, and the Ukrbureau links domestic police and law enforcement agencies with other countries and the General Secretariat (Chornyi et al., 2021).

The Central Intelligence Bureaus (CIBs) perform the function of information exchange in the investigation and detection of criminals in their home countries and distribute criminological and criminal intelligence data to assist other states. They enter data on domestic crimes into Interpol's global databases in accordance with national laws and co-operate in cross-border investigations, operations and arrests. Interpol's General Assembly sets the priorities and direction of activities, while the Executive Committee, consisting of the President, deputies and delegates representing different regions, manages the day-to-day operations. These activities are coordinated during the sessions of the General Assembly, which is responsible for ensuring that the activities of the Organisation meet the needs of the Member States as well as the principles and purposes of Interpol itself. The Assembly is empowered to approve the programmes of activities and the financial policy of the Organisation. It also elects the members of the Executive Committee (Kryvak, 2023).

The importance of Interpol in the prevention of economic crime and its particular types cannot be overestimated as it directs its activities at:

- Strengthening the material and technical base of combatting and prevention of economic crimes, including money counterfeiting, money laundering, corruption, smuggling and trafficking;
- provision of assistance in the investigation of economy-related crimes in various jurisdictions;
- preparation and training of experts for expert investigations of economic crimes;
- technical and other assistance to experts of different states;
- creation of universal electronic services for deeper research and information exchange on economic crimes;
- formation of global databases (for example, on counterfeited currency and securities);
- establishment of partner relations with the bodies of state power, law enforcement bodies and central banks of different states (Dote-Pardo & Severino-Gonzalez, 2025).

Interpol became a model for other international criminal police organisations, the most prominent of which is the European Union Agency for Law

Enforcement Co-operation (Europol). The creation of Europol was provided for in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which entrusted Europol with the task of coordinating the activities of the police forces of the EU Member States. The organisation was set up for the rapid exchange of operational information between the law enforcement agencies of the European states in the field of preventing and combating transnational crime and for the provision of technical and analytical assistance. The Europol Convention, which entered into force in 1998, was adopted in 1995 and provides for Europol to support the activities of the police forces of the Member States and of the States with which it has concluded co-operation agreements:

- Support in collection and exchange of information;
- collection, analysis and comparison of information on criminal activities on the territory of the EU;
- provision to competent authorities of the EU member states of information on interconnectedness of different types of crime;
- assisting the investigative bodies of Member States by provision of information through national Europol units;
- development of computer systems (informational, analytic and index) necessary to combat crime;
- direct participation in joint investigation teams;
- forwarding requests to the competent bodies of Member States on investigation of particular crimes;
- provision of analytical and technical assistance in operations, including on coordination of the use of resources for combatting international crimes;
- preparation of annual strategic reports containing crimes analysis based on the information provided by Member States, third countries and international partner organisations;
- running temporary databases on various issues;
- information support of investigations conducted by Member States (Abazi, 2013).

Ukraine and Europol signed an Agreement on Operational and Strategic Co-operation in 2017, which extended co-operation to the fight against all types of crime. Under the agreement, information is exchanged between Ukraine and Europol through the National Contact Point. However, this does not exclude the possibility of direct exchange of information between the competent bodies and Europol, as provided for in Article 7 of the Agreement, if both Parties deem it necessary. Furthermore, the Parties agreed that regular exchange of information is important in certain cases in order to improve and strengthen co-operation and to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement. Among other things, this may include:

- High-level meetings between the competent bodies of Ukraine and Europol, which regularly take place to discuss issues related to the Agreement and co-operation in general;

- the representatives of the National contact point and Europol regularly advise each other in matters of policy and other questions of common interest for the purposes of execution of their tasks and coordination of the corresponding activities;
- the representative of the National contact point can be invited to participate in the meetings of heads of Europol national units;
- Europol can invite experts from Ukraine for co-operation with expert and analysis groups (Chernik, 2022).

It should be added that certain provisions of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement confirm the parties' commitment to the cause of common economic security, including through the involvement of Europol. The parties agreed to develop co-operation in the exchange of best practices, including methods of criminal investigation and criminological research, and to enhance mutual potential, including through training and exchange of personnel. They also agreed to co-operate on the protection of victims and witnesses. This brings Ukraine ever closer to full co-operation with Europol in ensuring economic security as a future member of the European Union.

4. Perspective Directions of Future Development of International Co-operation of Law Enforcement Bodies in the Sphere of Ensuring Economic Security of States

Preventing and combating economic crime and ensuring the economic security of States is impossible without the development of new perspective methods of co-operation between States in this regard. In this regard, the 1990 resolution "Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Context of Development: Realities and Perspectives of International Co-operation", adopted in 1990 by the UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. This document delineates the threats posed by criminal activities in the context of development. It further expounds on concrete, specific measures to be undertaken in the prevention and combatting of all types of crime through international co-operation. The international community has identified a number of priorities, including the provision of a robust response to transnational criminality. This encompasses a wide range of issues, from organised crime and economic offences to human rights violations and severe forms of victimisation. The document under discussion places particular emphasis on the necessity of enhancing international expertise in the prevention and combatting of international crime, including the facilitation of informational exchange, technical co-operation, intergovernmental and interregional advisory activities, and other operational activities.

The document under discussion elucidates that economic crime, most notably corruption, is a universal problem, one which affects both developing and developed countries alike. This underscores the necessity for concerted efforts to be made towards its limitation and prevention. It is evident that organised criminal networks wield considerable influence over the economies of entire states, particularly those in the process of development. It is imperative that there is a robust and sustained technical co-operation between developed countries and those states lacking the necessary funds and infrastructure to combat economic crime. Consequently, the establishment of international programmes at both global and regional levels is imperative to provide support for the services of experts and the training of domestic personnel.

These perspective directions underwent further development in the subsequent years. An exemplar is provided in the 2000 Report of the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The Report underlines a strong connection between crime and economic security by stressing "a strong statistical correlation between the extent of organised crime and expected economic growth", as well as that "crime rates might increase or decrease depending on specific social and economic circumstances". In accordance with the 1990 conclusions, the Report calls for the intensification of bilateral and multilateral co-operation, encompassing technical co-operation, through donor co-operation in areas that have crime prevention aspects.

In 2021, the Congress adopted the Fourteenth Report in conjunction with the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law, which explicitly linked crime prevention initiatives with global social and economic development. The document delineates a series of challenges, including the escalating transnational nature of crime and the expanding exploitation of novel technologies for illicit purposes. The proposed response is consistent with previous recommendations, but is presented with greater emphasis. It calls for the enhancement of law enforcement and criminal justice institutions' and practitioners' capacities through co-operative endeavours, including in the domain of new technologies. This is to be achieved while preventing the misuse and abuse of such technologies. In accordance with the prevailing international conventions, the delegates reached a consensus on the necessity to "develop and implement effective measures to address the economic dimension of crime and deprive criminals and criminal organisations of any illicit gains". This consensus included the following measures: "identifying, tracing, seizing, confiscating, recovering and returning proceeds of crime, as well as establishing robust domestic frameworks for financial investigations, and to develop strategies to

prevent and combat money laundering and illicit financial flows". The objective is to be achieved, in part, through the promotion and facilitation of technical assistance, including material support and training. This is to be done "with a view to enabling law enforcement authorities and criminal justice institutions to effectively prevent and combat crimes, taking into account the specific challenges faced by and the particular needs of developing countries".

These documents provide a clear indication of the pathway into the future. The enhancement of co-operation, the sharing of information, the provision of technical assistance and the training of personnel are all key elements in this process. This is particularly pertinent in the context of Ukraine, which has historically placed significant value on the exchange of information and the promotion of co-operation within the domain of economic security. It is important to note that this type of co-operation is not limited to law enforcement; it is also evident in the realm of educational institutions, as evidenced by the collaboration between the Ukrainian police and the European Police College (Shvets & Yevdokimova, 2020). Such co-operation has been demonstrated to foster the growth of the professional potential of police professionals and educators, thereby enhancing the development of the educational process. This, in turn, has led to the formation of a new generation of officials who are committed to the rule of law.

5. Conclusions

The establishment of robust legal and institutional frameworks within international and domestic law constitutes a fundamental aspect of international co-operation among law enforcement agencies, with the objective of safeguarding the economic security of states. It is evident that such treaties are, first and foremost, of an international nature, being concluded between the governments of states and paving the way for more profound interinstitutional arrangements on the working issues of day-to-day co-operation. Ukraine is an active participant in such international activities, while its law enforcement agencies endeavour to establish amicable working relations with the representatives of the law enforcement bodies of other states. The overarching objective of this process is to establish a robust international network that aims to combat criminal activities that pose a threat to the economic security of states.

The foundation for such co-operative endeavours is constituted by a series of international treaties that are dedicated to the combatting and prevention of general crime, as well as specific types of crime that pose a significant threat to the economic security of states. These include, but are not limited to, corruption, money laundering and drug trafficking. Such agreements

are concluded on universal and regional levels, with the European system being the most developed one. Typically, influential international organisations such as the UN and the Council of Europe are responsible for proposing drafts that have been agreed upon by member states. The treaties identified in this research emphasise the importance of combatting the economic aspect of international organised crime, including through decisive measures such as co-operation in the identification, search, and confiscation of criminal assets and proceeds from crime. It is evident that all parties acknowledge the significance of collaborative efforts in the recovery of such assets, with the objective of ensuring the seamless progression of economic development, unencumbered by the influence of criminal elements.

Moreover, these treaties establish and nurture an international institutional framework for combatting economic crime, providing obligations and recommendations on the establishment of relevant domestic institutions, as well as co-operation between such institutions at different levels. Interpol, a global organisation of criminal police, plays a pivotal role in this regard. Its European counterpart, Europol, performs a similar function in Europe, often acting in a more profound manner. It is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal role these organisations

play as conduits for expert discourse and mutual informational support of law enforcement bodies in the prevention and combatting of economic crime, thereby ensuring the economic security of states.

The crux of the matter in ensuring the preservation of economic security through law enforcement lies in the consolidation and augmentation of such collaborative endeavours. This assertion is explicitly articulated in the recurring and evolving stance adopted by the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The majority of recent recommendations issued by the Congress place significant emphasis on the propensity of criminals to exploit new technologies to achieve their criminal objectives, including the attainment of economic dominance within entire states and regions. This, in turn, has the potential to jeopardise the entire global economic security system. The treatment for this ailment remains conventional, yet it is being advanced at the next level through international co-operation, the exchange of information and the education of legal professionals. In accordance with its state policies, Ukraine must continue to prioritise its involvement in such co-operative endeavours in order to ensure its own economic security and to maintain this security in the current era of global turbulence.

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